

Sing before the service: Psalm 107:1

Our help is in the Name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Beloved, grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Psalm of praise 3:2

Prayer

Psalm 71:10

Scripture reading: 2 Corinthians 5 and Ephesians 3

Scripture text: 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Ephesians 3:10; Catechism Lord's Day 6

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV)

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, (Ephesians 3:10 NIV)

How are we allowed to know who our Saviour is, what He has done and what He is still doing?

- In Ephesians 3:10 we read that we may ask the Lord to make his wisdom known to the church.
- The Lord reveals to us what we should know – it's written in his Word.

Hence we may read the Word of God to learn about our Saviour.

Let's consider the following that reveals to us what kind of a person our Saviour should be:

1. The righteousness of God our Saviour

2. Our Saviour and judgment on us

3. The permanence of our redemption

1. The righteousness of God our Saviour

In his redemptive plan the Lord reveals to us many things we do not understand, such as the fact that our Saviour is a true man but at the same time also the eternal and true God. How is it possible?

- Some of it we can understand, but the rest remains a mystery to us:
 - We can only accept it with faith.
 - God does not reveal how He did it.

But the Lord does reveal to us why it has to be like this. It is about God's righteousness – a specific punishment has to be carried out.

- We must remember that the Lord's righteousness is perfect. He will not do anything wrong because the justice He administers is as perfect as He is.
- We must also remember that the Lord's righteousness and his holiness go hand in hand, because the Lord maintains his honour and holiness through justice.

The justice of the Lord is twofold:

- On the one hand He blesses,
- and on the other He punishes.

- His judgment determines whom He blesses and whom He punishes.
- His judgment also determines that all sins against his majesty must be punished.

When the Lord judges us, his justice will determine to what extent we disobeyed all his commandments.

- The judgment of the Lord will therefore certainly tell that there are certain people He wants to have with Him and some He does not want to be with Him.
- This is after all logical, because somebody who has no respect for the Lord's commandments, like the devil for example, cannot go to a place filled with the glory of God. Such a person can only go where the Lord is not present – hell.

Hence the Lord's judgment is direct and personal:

- It's directed at the person who sinned.
- The Lord will therefore direct the punishment for my sins at myself.
 - This means trouble for us because we all know that we cannot survive the judgment of the Lord.

However, the Lord is not only God of judgment – He is also God of salvation. Just after man's fall in sin He promised a Saviour who would be able to bear the punishment for our sins.

2. Our Saviour and judgment on us

To continually remind man of the promised Saviour, the Lord instituted offerings.

- The offerings had no power in themselves and this is why they had to be repeated over and over.
- But they also served as a reminder of the Saviour who was to come.
- The offerings also predicted that the eventual offering would be that of a man.
- If the offering of an animal were sufficient, it wouldn't have been necessary to repeat these offerings.

The problem is however not so simple; we cannot say that the one who would act as Saviour just had to be a man.

- This Person also had to head of the covenant of redemption like Adam was head of the covenant of labour.

The point is that Adam's descendants all inherited his sins because he was head of that covenant.

- The Saviour now also had to be Head of the covenant of redemption so that those who follow Him would all be saved through Him.
- We read about it in 1 Corinthians 15:21 where the Scriptures teach us that since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead must also come through a man.
- In addition, the Saviour had to be a righteous man who would never sin, because there had to be no sins or taint of sin for which He would have to be punished.
- And the Saviour had to be able to show his power over Satan in a calculated way:
 - He had to die at the time He decided to die and rise from the dead when He wished to do so.
 - He didn't have to fight against death any less or any more to triumph over it.

Hence He declared his death when He spoke these words:

- **Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.** (Luke 23:46 NIV)
- Early in the morning on the third day He had already risen from the dead.
- Man could not have taken such a decision.

This explains why Jesus had to be God.

- He had to be able to enter and leave death according to his own will,
 - to confirm his eternal glory over it,
 - and also show his power by which He will let us rise from the dead.

But there's much more to it.

- Above all the Saviour had to bear the wrath of the Lord for the sins of all the chosen people.
- Hence He had to bear the full burden of the wrath of God.
- This is also a matter that only the Lord could deal with.

3. The permanence of our redemption

This matter has even more aspects than those we've mentioned so far.

- The Saviour also had to ensure that his redemptive ministry would hold good for all the people He had saved.
 - It may not age or expire.
- He could not just die, rise from the dead and ascend to heaven and then everything would be over.
 - He went away and is preparing a new heaven and new earth where He will receive the angels who haven't sinned and all the people He had saved to live there eternally.

Then another important aspect with regard to the Saviour is added:

- First He was made to be sin so that we could receive the righteousness of God.
- But now He comes as a judge— now He is the true Judge who will judge whether we have accepted this righteousness for ourselves.
- When we see the Saviour again He will command the earth to return the bodies of the dead.
 - We will see Him in his almighty power with which He will ensure that not a single saved one can fall into the hands of Satan.
 - We will see Him in the glory of his mercy when He comes to carefully gather the wheat into his barn.

Brothers and sisters, if we do not know all these facts, our faith will weaken.

- Then we will lag behind in worship.
- Hence we must utilise the means that God gives us to grow in faith.

First, the Holy Spirit who works in us.

- The Holy Spirit works in us when we read and study the Bible.
- Through his working in us He brings together in the church those who believe in the Triune God; and in the church we enjoy the fellowship with God.
- This is why public worship and family worship are so important.

The more we get to learn about the holiness of God, the more we'll realise that we have to repent of our sins every day.

- It's a fact that we realise how great our sins are when we learn about the righteousness of the Lord.
- And exactly this makes us realise that we have access to the throne of God through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - This knowledge leads us to obedience.
 - Obedience leads to thankfulness and to worship the only true God.

Brothers and sisters, this is a sermon of comfort to ensure you of your redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Christ, who is true God and also true man, and whom the Lord punished for our sins, saved you.
- You must know that He is coming to take you to Him for ever.

Let's read together Catechism Lord's Day 6.

16. Q. Why must He be a true and righteous man?

A. He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should pay for sin.[1] He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner cannot pay for others.[2]

[1] Rom: 5:12, 15; I Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:14-16. [2] Heb. 7:26, 27; I Pet. 3:18.

17. Q. Why must He at the same time be true God?

A. He must be true God so that by the power of His divine nature[1] He might bear in His human nature the burden of God's wrath,[2] and might obtain for us and restore to us righteousness and life.[3]

[1] Is. 9:5. [2] Deut. 4:24; Nah. 1:6; Ps. 130:3. [3] Is. 53:5, 11; John 3:16; II Cor. 5:21.

18. Q. But who is that Mediator who at the same time is true God and a true and righteous man?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,[1] whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption (I Corinthians 1:30).

[1] Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; I Tim. 2:5; 3:16.

19. Q. From where do you know this?

A. From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise.[1] Later, He had it proclaimed by the patriarchs[2] and prophets,[3] and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law.[4] Finally, He had it fulfilled through His only Son.[5]

[1] Gen. 3:15. [2] Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 49:10. [3] Is. 53; Jer. 23:5, 6; Mic. 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb. 1:1. [4] Lev. 1:7; John 5:46; Heb. 10:1-10. [5] Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4, 5; Col. 2:17.

Amen.

Closing prayer

Closing hymn: Psalm 90: 2, 9

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Amen.

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